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*Corresponding Author: hamidi665@uitm.edu.my

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION OF DAUD RAHIM'S VISUAL ARTWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL CULTURAL CHANGE

Hamidi Abdul Hadi^{1*}, Zahirah Harun², Issarezal Ismail³, Ishak Ramli⁴

^{1,2,3,4}College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar, Perak, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Visual art as a medium of human expression is a reflection of the changes that occur in society and culture. This study, therefore, aims to approach, understand and interpret the symbols behind the artworks created by Daud Rahim in the context of social cultural change. This study applies an art study approach that falls under the qualitative method that emphasizes on an in-depth and holistic explanation method based on a conceptual model that is developed based on concepts that are thought to be relevant to be the framework of the analysis. From the result of the analysis and discussion, it was found that the visual artworks created by Daud Rahim used personal symbols inspired from the world of animals and combined with the machine parts. Through the perspective of social and cultural change, the personal symbols he created reveal the human aspects of modern society that has lost its soul (spiritual) because it is too engrossed in the material world. The materialism culture, individualistic attitudes, secularistic process and crisis of spiritual crisis has pushed modern society to focus their attention on the accumulation of material things and goods until finally causing them to be complacent and unable to cultivate spiritual aspects that are very important to their inner life.

Keywords: Interpretation, Symbol, Visual Art, Daud Rahim, Social Cultural Change

INTRODUCTION

The development of visual art of this era is often referred to as contemporary art. The contemporary nature of visual art can be said to be a reflection to the situation or phenomenon of the society and culture in which the work of art was created by the artists. According to Turner (1999: 23), contemporary visual art nowadays is a product of the collision of the past, present and future. It is a form of confrontation against all types of phenomenon that occur in the field of economy, technology, society and also culture. Thus, all of them interact reciprocally with each other. The explanation above at least hints that contemporary visual art is currently present as a space for artists to reflect back on the issues or problems of society and culture around them. As stated by Saidi (2008: 1), that the birth of contemporary work of art always motivated by various issues that occur in society or culture. Furthermore, contemporary visual art is not created in a vacuum but are strongly influenced by the space and time in which that particular artwork was created.

The social and cultural reality after the third millennium has given rise to a number of polemics. On the one hand, there is significant progress in the field of technology that is not only translated through the development of infrastructure but also its implication for the change in the way society lived their everyday life. However, on the other hand, various challenges arise when there is a

decline in moral, ethical, cultural and spiritual values in some members of society. Among the social and cultural phenomenon resulted from this issue is for example cultural materialism, social dysfunction, excessive lifestyle, social tension, the erosion cultural and traditions, widespread of others cultural practices from outside and many more. These challenges inevitably have to be faced in the context of visual art. This can be reflected through the creation of visual artwork especially those produced by mid-career artists. This mid-career artist who not only have the experience and interest to deal with the social-cultural phenomenon of their time but also often critical, has a deep understanding and high empathy for any problems that arise in their environment (Linton, 1984: 122-124)

Based on this situation, taking into account the description of the introduction that has given above, it creates an urge to approach, explore and explain the visual art created by Daud Rahim, one of the influential mid-career artists in Malaysia. Aged 49 and born in Lenggong, Perak, he is a generation of mid-career artists who have proven their artistic existence through consistency held several solo exhibitions since 2004 and has won several major art awards at the national and international levels. In addition, he also had participated in dozens of group exhibitions in the country and abroad. This study was conducted to interpret the symbols and explain the meanings of visual art works created by Daud Rahim from the context of social cultural change through his Soul series (2013). The objectives of the study are in line with several questions to be answered in this study which among others include; (i) What are the symbols seen in the work of David Rahim? (ii) What is the social cultural change context behind the use of those symbols? And (iii) What is the meaning that is present behind the use of these symbols? The contributions of this study are expected to be able to contribute to the academic and social fields. Its academic contribution includes being able to develop the field of visual art in the area of knowledge of contemporary visual art works in the context of social and cultural change. Meanwhile, its social contribution can at least be used by people who want to understand and appreciate contemporary visual art works better and smoother.

METHODOLOGY

As a study in which the main object of study is a work of visual art, then this study can be classified into what is referred to by Rohidi (2011) as the study of art. It is also said that the study of art is a type of study that is under qualitative approach where it emphasizes on efforts to provide an explanation of the symbolic meanings that result from a human activity or culture, including visual artwork. As with any other type of qualitative study, an art study also involves almost identical research procedures and strategies. As the main instrument of the study, the involvement of the researcher in the field is especially important when going through the process of in-depth observation, flexible interviews and collection of relevant documents (see also Cresswell, 2014). Although an art study like this focuses on the visual artwork that is the object as well as the focus of the analysis, but the description of the report is presented in the form of text or words that are descriptive. Here, the experience and aesthetic sensitivity of the researcher is very much needed when dealing with data from a visual artwork.

In order to answer the problem of this study which is the symbolic interpretation of Daud Rahim's artwork in the context of social cultural change, here is explanation regarding some of the key concepts that are adapted from several disciplines which are considered relevant. These adapted concepts are then combined and linked to form an analysis framework to approach and understand the symbols present from the artwork so that it can give some guidance to interpret the meaning of social cultural change behind the presence of that symbols from a number of visual artworks that have been selected for the analysis.

Interpretation

Interpretation is the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in literal meaning (Ricoeur, 1981: 13). In other words, interpretation can be understood as a process of mediating and conveying the implicit meaning of the explicit meaning contained in a text. If interpretation is said to be a process of mediating between the dimension of text and the dimension of meaning, then of course the process of interpretation requires

a certain method or ways so that something is not understood at first can be understood in the end. With regard to this discussion, Poespoprodjo (1987: 192-198) introduces three important dimensions in the process of interpretation in which the three dimensions that are interrelated with each other, namely; (i) describe, (ii) explain and (iii) translate. Below is an explanation of that three dimensions.

Firstly, interpretation has a descriptive dimension that aims to show, reveal, allow the emergence or open up of a text to be interpreted. In this context, it deals with the process of identifying each element in the text that has the potential to be interpreted. As for these elements can be in the form of writing, visuals, sound, body movements and so on. All of these stated elements can be grouped into signs and symbols. Secondly, interpretation has an explanatory dimension that has the function of providing an explanation so that something is made clear. Interpretation activities here are carried out by trying to relate an element to be interpreted with external factors or can be called context such as explaining the meaning according to an older text, explaining events or de facto that is the background for an element of the text. This dimension of interpretation at least suggests that meaning is a matter of context. Only in a certain context does something mean something. This is because the entire activity to provide this explanation is intended to provide space for a thorough understanding. However, this does not mean that a text is always described through data outside the text. Data outside the text is only relevant to the extent that the influence of the data can be related to elements within the text. Lastly, the third dimension of interpretation is translating. It serves as a process of transferring meaning and this is actually the core of the translation problem. Here, translating is not just replacing an existing word without being able to capture the essence of the content or the implicit meaning that a text wants to convey. This implicit meaning can be said to be the result of the relationship between the elements of the text being described (first dimension) with its contextual factors (second dimension). When the three dimensions of interpretation are passed smoothly, then the process of interpretation is complete.

Symbol in Visual Art

As a concept, Dillistone (2002: 18) states that a symbol is something that is an object, picture, sound, text or any form of human invention that is used to replace something outside the existence of its real form. The simple definition of a symbol gives the understanding that a symbol essentially wants to associate an object of a tangible nature with anything that is abstract or broader in nature. Something that is abstract or broader can only cover the world of human meaning itself such as certain concepts, opinions, emotions, ambitions, hopes, desires or belief. In line with the above explanation, a symbol can thus be understood as a noun, verb and adjective (Saidi, 2008: 29). Here, a symbol is seen as a noun referring to the existence of its form such as an object, picture, sound, action or whatever is the result of human creation. As a verb, a symbol is expressed as a representation to signify, indicate, describe or replace everything it represents. Whereas a symbol as an adjective contains deeper, larger or broader meanings where it is detached from the literal meaning of the symbol itself.

In the context of visual art, symbols always appear through image (visual) elements. But it is also able to be presented through the use of medium (material) and also on the expression of form. Through the element of a picture (visual), a symbol is present through a depiction of a human, object, animal and location or place. It can also be present through artistic elements and design principles such as lines, colors, looks, textures, contrast, rhythm, repetition, movement, light-dark and many more. According to Rohidi (2000: 33), symbols present in such recognizable beings are often referred to as iconic symbols; whereas, symbols with such abstract qualities are often referred to as abstract symbols.

Operationally, the use of a symbol in a visual artwork is largely determined by the existence of a basis of similarity between two different things so that a symbol can be a mediator between the world of objects (symbols) and the world of human experience (meaning). In this context, a symbol is tried to be able to display a rule that has a parallel between a symbol with the concept that is the background of its existence. It is based on that principle that makes a symbol so different from a sign because in general a sign displays directly what it signifies. On the other hand, a symbol is nothing more than an indirect representation of whatever is to be symbolized (Rohidi, 2000: 34).

From the aspect of its nature, a symbol that is worked on a visual artwork is a communication tool used by the artist to express a certain meaning to the observer of his work. According to Ogden and Richard (1989: 11), a symbol in a visual artwork in fact contains a significant meaning or meaning that leads to a meaning based on certain concepts where it has a connotation relationship between a

symbol and its reference source. These concepts can refer to the world of human experience (meaning) that has been discussed previously. However, it should be emphasized here that the symbolic meaning of a visual artwork not only has a social dimension where the meaning results from the collective accuracy of society but also has a personal dimension developed by the painter himself when the concept that he wants to highlight does not have a symbolic vocabulary rather it must be self-created.

Social Cultural Change

Social cultural change are changes that occur in social and cultural elements in the life of a society. Although there is a difference between social change and cultural change, in the reality of everyday life it does not happen like that. The reason is that there will be no society that is able to live without culture and culture itself is not able to function without a community that supports it (Sarinah, 2016: 37). What is meant by social elements are social institutions such as social systems, social values, social attitudes, social norms, social stratification systems, social structures, social processes and pattern of social relations (Maryati and Suryawati, 2001: 3). Whereas, what is meant by cultural elements are language, knowledge systems, social systems, technology, livelihood system, religion and art (Sutardi, 2007: 34). In social cultural change there are two directions behind it. As stated by Joyomartono (1991: 53), the first direction refers to the movement of progress which refers to development, renewal, modernity, forward and others. In short, progress is a change that leads to prosperity so that it benefits people's lives and culture. On the other hand, the second direction is also known as regression, which is related to backwardness, decline, destruction and others. In simple terms, this negative impact of this direction is a form of social cultural change that leads backwards so that the impression is less beneficial for society and culture.

Based on the social cultural reality that has existed so far, Rohidi (1994: 103-104) stated that the social cultural elements that are easy to change are physical ones such as technology, economy, art, lifestyle, infrastructure and knowledge. On the other hand, social cultural elements that are not easy to change are the non-physical ones such as belief, attitudes, values, norms, religion and others. However, as time goes on, changes that occur in material culture gradually have an influence and impact on the preservation and defense of the non-material culture of that particular society, especially when today's culture moves more rapidly and dynamically. When faced with social cultural change, the impression of these changes depends on the type of society that accept the social cultural change that occur. For those who accept, there will be integration and alignment in the society. This adjustment is always accepted as an adaptation strategy that must be lived, enjoyed and carried out properly in forms of social integration. But this integration and adaptation is not linear and produce good results. Sometimes, acceptance of a social cultural change can also have the opposite impact on the society when there is a decline in social relations, deviations in attitudes and behavior from members of society, erosion of cultural values and others. In short, the changes received will change other aspects that were previously guarded and maintained by the society. However, if a social cultural change is not well accepted by the members of society, then there will be some negative implication such as development setbacks, social unrest, poverty, criminal cases, racial tension and many more. But not all the changes that are rejected will have bad consequences for certain cultures and societies. It is not uncommon to public to see and hear how the rejection of change will benefit the society and culture, for example from the aspects of cultural preservation, cultural survival, social harmony, social compliance and others. With that being said, the acceptance and rejection of a social cultural change has its good and bad sides depending on how to community response to it. Based on the concepts that have been discussed above and by taking into account the relationship between these concepts, below is the conceptual model that can be used as an analysis framework to approach, interpret and explain the symbol presented in the visual artwork created by Daud Rahim in the context of social cultural change.

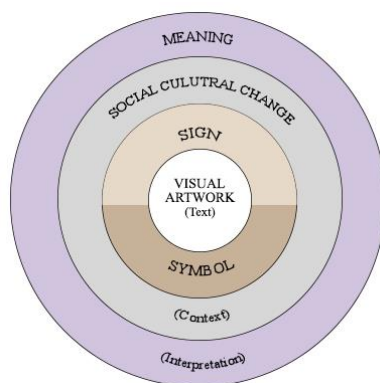


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Symbolic Interpretation of Visual Art in the Context of Social Cultural Change

Through a conceptual model that will be used as an analysis framework and developed based on the concepts described previously (Figure 1), it can be explained here that visual artwork as object of study or can be referred as text are placed in a position in the middle as the target of analysis which consists signs or symbols attached to it. A sign or symbol can appear as visual elements (pictorial) or abstract quality such as line, shape, texture, contrast, repetitions and others. Next, the analysis begins with an explanation of the signs or symbols that appear from the visual artwork being studied (refer to the second circle). Through a sign, a visual element is able to describe something that can be recognized, whether it is a character of human, animal, plant or a thing. As a sign, the visual can show a direct relationship with what it is sign for so that the understanding obtained can be linked to the reference source of the displayed sign. On the other hand, a sign can also be interpreted at the same time as a symbol. Here, a symbol has arbitrary properties and through it a symbol does not have any direct relationship with its reference source. In terms of interpretation, a symbol can be assigned to its meaning based on its context (refer to outside circle) as a basis for references that are related to it, which is social cultural change. The understanding obtained through the analysis of the signs and symbols will then open the horizon of understanding of the meaning which is the content of the visual artwork.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

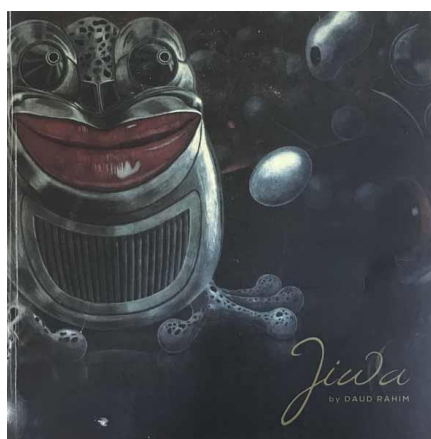


Figure 2. Front page of Jiwa (2013) Solo Exhibition by Daud Rahim

Jiwa (2013) is a series of paintings and sculptures that have been presented in Daud Rahim's third solo exhibition at the Segaris Art Center gallery, Kuala Lumpur on June 1st to 25th. The artist has exhibited a total of 13 sculptures and 12 pieces of painting. The body of work in this exhibition took two years to complete before exhibited to the public. This solo exhibition has been curated by Jalaini Abu Hassan

and Ramlan Abdullah, two well-known visual art academicians cum artist in the country. In addition, to complete the discourse from the narrative aspect, Susan Stankard, PhD has agreed to be a guest writer who has written at length in the writing of the introduction to the exhibition catalogue. In general, all the drawings produced by Daud Rahim in his solo exhibition are on a large scale, approximately 120cm x 170cm. Yet, one cannot ignore his strength in the use of alternative techniques and mediums in this exhibition. Over 600 pencils in 200 different colors were used to create these drawings and in all of them using black Chinese ink and acrylic transparent based coat as the ground.

The combination of Chinese ink and acrylic transparent based coat allows the surface of the canvas used to get appropriate texture to allow the chalk from the color pencil to adhere well. When asked why he had chosen the color pencil medium as his choice, he stated that he wanted to challenge himself to produce works of art using less popular materials and a medium that was considered by many as to have no prestige like oil paint or acrylic. As with his drawings, Daud Rahim did not choose an easy option with the medium of his sculptures, which are technically held together by riveting. The material used in the sculptures are a combination of used and new objects (usually toy or household parts) and aluminum plate. He would scour junk or scrap metal objects, which he thought, might be suitable to use. It provides Daud Rahim within inner satisfaction to use discarded objects, to see that material objects to not exist as one object. When he cannot find the correct shape or object he needs, he will make it from aluminum plate. He has often spent days and nights in his studio working on his drawings and sculptures, riveting metal sculptures by day and drawing by night, so as not to annoy the neighbors with the noise of the riveting machine.



Figure 3. Ikan Laga 1, Color Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas, 171cm x 171cm, 2012-2013 (left)



Figure 4. Semut 2, Metal, 59cm x 22cm, 2012-2013 (right)

In general, the main visual presented in Daud Rahim's artworks including drawing and form are animals consisting of insects (dragonfly, grasshopper, spider, ant), amphibian (frog), mammals (whale, tiger, rhino, gaur) and vertebrates (chitala, Siamese fighting fish, arowana). The choice of the subject of the animals mentioned is not too surprising because according to Daud Rahim, he has been an animal lover from a long time ago. In fact, at a young age he dreamed of becoming a veterinarian, so he took up science in high school before changing his direction and interests to become an art teacher when he grew up. What's interesting is that the subject of the animal that is depicted or shaped by Daud Rahim is not a representation of the origin of the reference source. As can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4, subjects such as ant or Siamese fighting fish are printed with parts of the machine that form the skeletal and internal organs of the animal which are visible due to the presence of transparent effects created on the body part of the animal. Visually, the juxtaposition of these two organic and geometric subject matters on the one hand creates a strong contrast and on the other hand creates a focal point for his works so as to encourage the attention of the observer to focus on that particular part. This is the specialty of Daud Rahim's work, which is strongly impressed by the Surrealism style and although according to the records in the catalogue (Stankard, 2013: 13) he repeatedly emphasized that he did not intentionally incorporate this style into his creative work or think about that approach when working.

To understand the signs and symbols of animals that formed with skeletal and machine organs, we must first understand the content behind Daud Rahim's thoughts. Through the artist's statement provided in the exhibition catalogue from his solo exhibition, Daud Rahim (2013: 4) stated that the main idea for his works is related to the essence of the human soul living in a materialistic world. In the context of social cultural change, materialism is seen as the impact that particularly occur in the society because of the changes in economic and technological fields. As a belief system, materialism refers to the belief that the main goal of life is to have as much wealth and goods as possible. People who hold this view think that the key to happiness and success can be measured by the amount of property they have, the quality of goods and the price of the goods that a person can buy (Chaplin & John, 2007: 2). That is why materialistic thinking increasingly dominates modern society because they believe that a person's success is largely based on material aspects. Thus, it can be understood that the presence of the visual sign can be a symbol to express the modern man's obsession in the pursuit of wealth and possessions which is his main life goal until now. Although it can't be denied that everyone wants to live a comfortable life in these modern times because there are too many challenges in terms of economy that make many people work hard for a comfortable life. However, the need for a comfortable life has finally become a strong desire so that people obsessed with the material aspects of their lives.



Figure 5. Badak Sumbu, Color Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas, 122cm x 251cm, 2012-2013

That's why in order to express his feelings towards the condition of today's modern human soul, Daud Rahim has used a colored pencil etching technique that can create a transparent effect that shows the outside and inside of the animal at the same time. Presumably, his deep interest in the field of medicine has a strong influence on his visual vocabulary so that the transparent visual effect seems to have resemblance to the effect of x-ray film that are often used in the medical field to diagnose by

doctors when treating patients. Observing carefully as for example in Figure 5, we will be able to see the internal picture of the rhinoceros' body that does not reflect the pulse of life in its body to the point of being stiff, hard and inorganic. Although the internal organs and bones of the machine showed a sophisticated formation, but basically it did not show the agility of a species of mammal life that was roaming freely in a safari or jungle. Regarding to this matter, Daud Rahim (2013: 5) in his artist's statement contained in his exhibition catalogue stated

"Until one day we realize that we are advance in every possible in our material world yet withering inside for our souls are empty and meaningless."

What can be understood from the artist's statement above is that materialism makes modern society lose their soul. From the perspective of social and cultural change, this is referred to as secularization, which is the social change of modern society that appears when the thinking related to modernity grows. Secularization appeared almost at the same time as the process of fading various aspects, both at the level of society, individual and religion. The secularization that plagues modern society cannot be contained anymore because of the demands from the advancement of science, economic and technology (Rosana: 2018: 142). The view of modern society is gradually changing and focusing a lot on worldly performance rather than spiritual performance. As a result, modern society has lost one of its most fundamental aspects, which is the spiritual aspects. So, the use of the visual sign of the effect of transparency created by Daud Rahim in his works can be a symbol to express the loss of the soul of modern man as a result by the influence of the secularization process that has occurred so that modern man only pursues worldly performance at the same time forgets his spiritual performance. Here, the human soul replaced material energy that will make humans think and work like a machine, to get results that can be calculated and seen instead of looking for a way to improve the level of spiritual performance to achieve peace in their inner life.

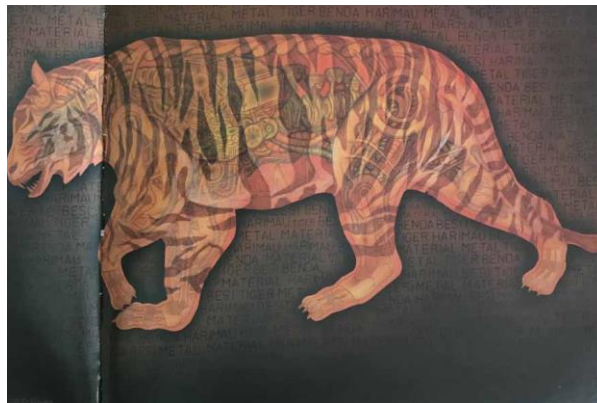


Figure 6. Harimau Malaysia, Color Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas, 171cm x 122cm, 2013 (left)



Figure 7. Arowana, Color Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas, 122cm x 122cm, 2012 (right)

As previously explained, the visual of the animal created by Daud Rahim are generally are in motion on a dark background without the presence of other animal or any other subjects. Thus, it evokes an active but silent effect. This, for example, can be seen through Figure 6 and Figure 7 where a Malayan tiger and an arowana fish are seen walking and swimming actively in an empty space without their natural habitat or man-made environment, whether it is in a jungle, zoo, aquarium or river. However, what is certain is that the animals seem to be engrossed in their own world without paying any attention to the presence of observers who are carefully observing what the animals are doing.

Commenting on this, Daud Rahim through his interview session with Standkard (2013:7) said:

“When we are so busy working, studying, doing artwork, then the easiness of life has disappeared. Relationship can decrease when we are so busy working in order to pursue our goals for worldly things.”

In social cultural change context, the decline in the quality of relationships between humans and the community around them can be linked to individualistic attitudes that relate to a human’s belief that his own interest is greater than the interest of others around him. It is contrary to the cultural values of collective or communal that demand cooperation, communication and social relations with the view that humans need others to answer all the challenges facing in their daily lives (Toomey & Nishida: 1991: 283). In short, individualistic people are not able to set aside time for social relationships because they have been distracted by their own work to achieve personal ambitions or dreams that they feel are much more important than closeness to their own family and friends.

Clearly, through this symbol, Daud Rahim wants to give a message to every one of us that no matter how busy people are in the pursuit of material things, don’t let it damage the human relationships that we have, whether it’s family, brotherhood or friendship. Individualism erodes the human qualities of fellow human beings such as empathy, love, appreciation, respect, tolerance and others. Slowly, it makes people only think about themselves and unconsciously forget other people who play an important role in their life journey from the past until now. Unfortunately, the consequences of this bad attitude end up severing social bonds and causing major problems or social conflicts that harms many parties.



Figure 8. Belida, Color Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas, 171cm x 122cm, 2012-2013

With regards to the size and scale of the animal subject, which can be said to be large and fills almost two thirds of the canvas surface, it has produced gigantic visual effect in a narrow space. Not to mention, the subjects he draws are actually relatively small in reality. In the hands and imaginative thinking of Daud Rahim, it was magnified couple of times until it evoked a sense of awe as well as fear to the observers. Just look at Figure 8, for example, at how a giant chitala swims in a space that does not match its own body size, so the observer can imagine how difficult it is for the fish to move freely in the limited space and when and at any time it has the potential to attack. Apparently, the size of the large body in the end does not match the life space that he is living. To interpret the meaning of the large animal body in this narrow space, the clue may be obtained through the data of Daud Rahim's conversation with Susan Standkard (2013: 6) who mentions his personal question about the human being who is never satisfied with what he has.

"Why can't we satisfied with what we have? It's ok to want things, but don't spoil the good inside of your heart."

For Daud Rahim, humans do that to themselves. It starts with a desire to meet basic needs and then leads to the desire to get more. From the perspective of social cultural change, this can be linked to the change in human attitudes towards lifestyle driven by modern capitalism which has changed the structure and culture of society to the point of giving rise to a great desire and lust to own property and uncontrollable wealth (Joyomartono, 1991: 87). They will find a way to satisfy their lust and desire to be richer by getting more and more so that they can live more comfortably and with more dignity than before and always want to look more successful than others around him. This phenomenon often happens to the middle class because they are the main target of the modern capitalist system that relies on consumerism lifestyle that controls their thinking, feeling and behaving system.

Based on the relevance of the context, this symbol loaded with the moral content can imply the meaning of the greedy attitude of modern humans who have lost their sense of gratitude and are never satisfied with what they already have. This attitude encourages people not to believe the value of simplicity in life and is easily tempted by the luxury of the material world. It's true, change of times that opens up opportunities for modern society to earn a living should teach humans to know when they should stop. That is the essence of the simplicity of life when people seek sustenance to meet their needs instead of making as much profit as possible.



Figure 9. Katak 1, Metal, 72cm x 50cm, 2012-2013 (left)



Figure 10. Generasi Baru, Metal, 42cm x 38cm, 2012-2013 (right)

In contrast to his paintings that have been discussed above, some of Daud Rahim's sculptures feature biomorphic structures resulting from the grafting of animals form and vehicle parts. Sometimes, the animals seem to have mutated into strange creature and create frightening feelings when one's look at it. At a first glance, regardless of the title given to his work as seen in Plate 9, it is quite difficult to

recognize that the sculpture is a combination of a frog and a plane. What's more absurd, if one's look at Plate 10, it is certainly difficult for the observer to recognize for sure what type of animal is the source of reference for the sculpture because the shape of the sculpture seems to have been completely removed from its natural reality.

In regard to this matter, Daud Rahim (2013: 4) in his artist's statement stated it as follows:

"If man only pays his attention to the progress of the things around him, then the only ones that develop are the things around him. If a man neglects the cultivation of his soul, then the man lost to himself no matter how advanced the things are around him. A man will take pride in the things achieved materially but is careless in developing his own soul."

The statement above at least tells that the visual sign of the horrible animal body is a representation of the unbalanced human being because it is dominated by the material world. Seen from the context of social cultural change, this imbalance can refer to the crisis of modern human values that are trapped in an atmosphere of loss of balance in daily life. This is related to the human condition which is generally fighting against its own nature by focusing excessively on the doctrine of materialism and neglecting spiritual needs (Salman, 2016). As a result, they are trapped in a severe spiritual and psychological crisis that changes the character and essence of the human being into new character that can invite danger to himself and others around them.

Symbolically, it can be interpreted as the existence of humans as living being who are struggling with the world that they created themselves. Their existence is like a ferocious monster, a symbolic analogy taken from modern culture myth referring to the animal world that has a large and monstrous body figure, which may have resemblance and similarities with the transformation of the identity of modern humans who have been immersed in the current of materialism so that they cannot leave the material culture that has been become a part of themselves even though on the other hand it has run away from the essence of humanity itself and is able to have a bad impact on oneself and others close to it.



Figure 11. Seladang Besi, Color Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas, 171cm x 251cm, 2012-2013

Finally, the analysis and discussion came to the main visual sign in the *Jiwa* (2013) series by Daud Rahim, which are animals of various kinds and types that have already been discussed in the beginning. The interpretation on it is deliberately explained at the of this writing because to provide a background for comprehensive understanding and to avoid any misunderstanding when the interpretation is done on it. According to Daud Rahim, the selection of animals as the main subject of the study in his works is a representation of living things whose daily life is nothing more than continuously searching for food, or let's say fulfilling its biological needs. That is the goal of an animal's life, as long as it lives it will try its best and direct its attention to overcome the hunger for food that will never stop as long as it lives and breathes.

That is what distinguished animals from humans. Humans not only lives in the material world but also in the spiritual world. Unlike animals that rely only on instinctive force to face problems in

their lives, humans therefore have a soul that can direct them to become a person who has intelligence, feelings and conscience. However, when humans have lost their spiritual aspect, then there is no difference between humans and other living things such as animals. In the context of social cultural change, this happens because of a crisis of belief system or more precisely a spiritual crisis. This crisis occurs because the modern human soul stops at the animalistic force (physical) only and cannot activate or cultivate the force of conscience (spiritual) (Salman, 2016). So, this soul will always be restless because it was not created to fulfill desires and passions alone. It will be inflamed with existential-psychological anguish at once. If it continues to be left alone, it will become anything and equal to an animal.

Here, it is clear that the use of animal symbols in Daud Rahim's artworks in this series is not to degrade human dignity as the highest living creature on earth but as an analogy to express his feelings towards the reality of modern human life today which has lost its dignity. Humans today have lost consideration and balance between material world and the spiritual world because the development and changes that occurs in their era (social and cultural). He only concentrates his efforts to accumulate as much material and goods as possible so that he forgets to live the spiritual side which is the important part of life that distinguish him from animals. Without it, human is just living beings facing life without soul (spiritual).

CONCLUSION

Visual art as a medium of human expression is a reflection of the changes that occur in society and culture. The social and cultural reality after the third millennium has given rise to a number of polemics. On the one hand, there is significant progress in the field of technology that is not only translated through the development of infrastructure but also its implication for the change in the way society lived their everyday life. However, on the other hand, various challenges arise when there is a decline in moral, ethical, cultural and spiritual values in some members of society. These challenges inevitably have to be faced in the context of visual art. This can be reflected through the creation of visual artwork especially those produced by mid-career artists. Through a series of paintings and sculptures entitled *Jiwa* (2013), Daud Rahim has cultivated a visual language inspired by the animal world and has juxtaposed it with machine parts to form hybrid animal creatures composed through color pencil strokes on canvas with transparent effect. Through the perspective of social and cultural change, the personal symbols he created reveal the human aspects of modern society that has lost its soul (spiritual) because it is too engrossed in the material world. The materialism culture, individualistic attitudes, secularistic process and crisis of spiritual crisis has pushed modern society to focus their attention on the accumulation of material things and goods until finally causing them to be complacent and unable to cultivate spiritual aspects that are very important to their inner life.

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